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SUBJECT: JUNE 8 PARLIAMENT SESSION DEADLOCKS OVER SPEAKER'S  
POWERS ON PERSONNEL ISSUES

Classified By: Political Counselor Margaret M.  
Scobery for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. The June 8 Council of Representatives (CoR) session deadlocked in a dispute over the powers of the Speaker over CoR personnel matters. The Shia Coalition supported an amendment that would limit the authority of the Speaker, thus allowing the two Deputies to overrule the Speaker on any personnel decision. The Speaker and his Tawafuq supporters argued that the Speaker should have sole authority in these matters. A lengthy debate produced no solution, with the Speaker unwilling to allow a vote knowing that he would likely lose. When the exchanges between the Speaker and the members became acrimonious -- and the UIC and Kurdish Alliance were preparing to walk out-- the Speaker adjourned the session. The Shia Coalition met to determine the best way to settle the situation and SCIRI member Ridha Jawad Taki told us he has advised Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim to convene a meeting of all of the political blocs to resolve the issue.  
End Summary

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The Session Breaks Down Over Control Over Personnel  
Decisions  
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¶2. (SBU) The Council of Representatives (CoR) reconvened June 8 to consider the remaining unapproved articles of its bylaws. They were able to complete action on about half of these articles. Discussion broke down when the members reached Article 9, section twelve of the bylaws. (NOTE: The current draft of this section indicates that if there is no consensus between the speaker and his two deputies, a decision on matters relating to the hiring, firing, and oversight of CoR employees may be taken by the speaker and only one deputy. If the Speaker does not obtain the agreement of at least one deputy in a decision, no action could be carried out. END NOTE.)

¶3. (SBU) In a move that would dilute the Speaker's role in personnel matters, but nevertheless provide a mechanism for breaking the gridlock, the bylaws committee submitted an amendment for consideration that would allow both deputies to overrule the decision of the Speaker. Speaker Mahmoud Mashadani argued in contrast that he should have the sole power over personnel decisions, without needing the buy-in of either of the deputies. Tawafuq members supported the Speaker, arguing that while political decisions could be shared among the speaker and his deputies, managerial decisions should be under the sole control of the speaker. UIC (which supported the amended version), along with some members from the

Kurdish Alliance and Iraqiyya, called for a vote on the two versions of the article.

¶4. (SBU) Bylaw Committee and Iraqiyya member Judge Wael Abd al-Latif, told the members that the bylaws committee represented all of the political blocs so its suggestions (including the one that the Shia Coalition supported) should be respected and a vote should be taken- if not, he would resign from the committee. Likely knowing that the amended version would pass, the Speaker told him to go ahead and resign. He told the Shia Coalition members that, if the UIC is so keen on consensus, then no voting would take place until there is a consensus among all members. When a Kurdish Alliance member told the Speaker that he should use the podium and not the Speaker's chair to make such statements, Mashadani accused him of trying to take his place. As the Kurdish Alliance and Shia Coalition members started to stand up and walk out, Mashadani adjourned the session.

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The Political Blocs May Need to Solve the Issue  
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¶5. (C) Later in the evening, Tawafuq CoR member Ala'a Makky called PolOff to ask for Embassy support in fighting the articles of the bylaws that would limit the powers of the Speaker. PolOff responded that the political parties must work this issue out, noting that all of the parties were represented on the bylaws committee.

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¶6. (C) In a meeting with PolOffs June 9, CoR and SCIRI member Ridha Jawad Taki said members of the UIC Leadership Committee (G-7) met after the CoR session June 8 to discuss how to calm the situation. He added that he had advised Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim to call a meeting of all of the political bloc leaders to resolve the issue. At the same meeting, SCIRI Chief of Staff Haitham al-Husseini said this would not be possible for a few days since al-Hakim would be traveling.

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Mashadani's Treatment of Members During the Debate  
Inflames Passions  
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¶7. (C) As the debate over the personnel decisions continued (and as it became increasingly clear that the non-Sunni Arab blocs wanted to limit the Speaker's authority in personnel decisions), Mashadani moved to silence other members and used discourteous language. Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) CoR member Tania Gilly described Mashadani's language to PolOff as "highly inflammatory" and complained that his behavior had not been professional. As the members were leaving the session room, Kurdistan Democratic Party member Abdul Khaliq al-Zangana began shouting at Tawafuq bloc leader Adnan Dulaymi. He blamed Tawafuq for its bad choice of Speaker and criticized Mashadani's demeaning treatment of members. He added that that Mashadani's behavior was only hurting the Sunni Arabs' cause. Dulaymi did not respond.

¶8. (C) Comment. Neither the bylaws committee nor the full CoR has been able to solve the dispute over the Speaker's authorities. The leaders of the political blocs will need to solve this issue, so that the CoR can form committees and begin its legislative work. This issue has upset many Sunni Arab members. One Tawafuq member complained during the session that the

Sunni Arabs were being marginalized again, i.e., due to restrictions on the Sunni Speaker's power. It is unfortunate that the Speaker allowed his frustration to affect his demeanor in the June 8 session. This shifted the focus of member's attention to him, rather than the debate over the bylaws. End Comment.  
KHALILZAD